

COUNSELING AN ANXIOUS CLIENT
by
Thomas A. Routh

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COUNSELING

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Number 1

YMCA of Greater New York Devotes City-Wide Staff Training Session to Counseling

Under the direction of the Counseling Cabinet, the city-wide staff of the YMCA of Greater New York devoted a monthly staff meeting to a training session on Counseling.

Counseling Keystone of Services to the Individual

The training session opened with a statement on the importance attached to counseling by the YMCA of Greater New York. Counseling is considered as the keystone of services to the individual.

The Vocational Service Center

The Vocational Service Center of the YMCA of Greater New York is the focal point of Counseling Services in the YMCA of Greater New York. The center is thirty years old and in November received commendation from the President of the United States for meritorious service. The professional staff of the Center includes: the executive director, consultant-counselor, seven counselors, three psychometrists, three interns, and four placement counselors. Services are available to youth and adults of both sexes.

Fees for Individual Counseling Services

Members of branches of the YMCA of Greater New York pay \$22.50; members of other YMCAs pay \$25.00; and non-YMCA members pay \$30.00. No charge is made for an interpretive interview.

Other Services from the Center

Veterans Advisement—Counseling is available to veterans who qualify under the GI Bill without cost to them, under a contract with the Veterans Administration.

Group Guidance-Branch Presentation — Counseling is made available to small groups or to leaders either at branches or at the Vocational Service Center.

Testing—The following testing schedule is maintained:

	<i>Day:</i>
Monday-Friday	9:15-12:00 noon 1:15- 4:30 p.m.
Saturday	9:00-12:00 noon
	<i>Evening:</i>
Tuesday, Thursday	5:45- 8:30 p.m.

Personnel Evaluation—Personnel appraisal through counseling and testing is available for business and industry. Some 30 firms have used this service, i.e., Time, Inc.; West Virginia Paper and Pulp Company; International Committee of the YMCA, etc. Help related to hiring, upgrading, and transferring is provided. Executives and owners, or personnel men are referred to VSC with regard to their personnel problems.

Placement Service—Priority is given to YMCA members—men and women. Interviewing hours are: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, and 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. weekdays. Evening interviews are arranged by appointment. Moderate fees are charged for placement on a job.

Special Placement and Counseling Services for Older Workers—Persons 45 to 60 years of age are accepted, if they meet qualifications established by the Three Agency (Archdiocesan Vocational Service, Federation Employment Service, Vocational Service Center) older workers program, under the auspices of the New York State Department of Labor. No charge is made for this service.

Special Placement Program for Persons With Cardiac Disease—To be accepted, one must be approved by competent medical authority, or sent by the New York Heart Fund, or by hospitals. There is no charge made for this service.

Displaced Persons—Persons accepted from authorized sources — churches, nationality groups.

Recruitment Service — Branches of the YMCA of Greater New York are provided

with applicants for non-professional positions: desk clerks, bookkeepers, stenographers, typists, group workers, etc. There is no charge made for this service. All job opportunities, full or part time, should be listed with VSC.

Library—Occupational files, school and college information (catalogs, information on scholarships) and books on subjects related to occupational choice, building of resumes, or the general field of psychology are available to YMCA members and professional YMCA staff. Library materials are available on loan by special arrangement. Library open Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., and Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Credit Aid—Available to those YMCA members who meet the policies established by the Association.

Guidance to Group Leaders—Seminars and conferences are conducted for group leaders to enable them to better serve the members and groups.

Scholarship Information and Assistance is available for those who are interested.

Presbyterian Employment Service — Vocation Service Center provides office facilities to the Presbytery of New York to serve its members seeking employment.

Demonstration by Role Playing—In order to interpret the work of VSC quickly and convincingly to many new staff members and to review for the more experienced staff members matters related to:

- (1) Making good referrals,
- (2) Professional techniques of counseling,
- (3) The need for cooperative efforts in counseling,

the entire staff of VSC, through the medium of role playing provided a stimulating, scintillating, and well-received program.

David Hoats, a placement counselor, carried the main role, first, of one who was inadequately referred for help. The great amount of time required to get at the problem of this young man from "Pretty Prairie, Texas" provided good interpretation of the need for good referral in placement work or for counseling, and provided much good earthy humor.

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J. LAWRENCE BRODERICK,
*Executive Director of
the Vocational Service
Center YMCA, and
some members of his
staff.*

Reading left to right:
EDWARD KANESHIGE,
Counselor;

MARJORIE DICKEY,
Psychometrist;

J. LAWRENCE BRODERICK,
Executive Director;

DAVID HOATS,
Counselor.

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Mr. Hoats, in a second role as a client "properly referred" for counseling provided dramatic evidence of how a case is expedited by:

- Good referrals.
- Various aspects of preliminary counseling (including the outlining of costs).
- Assignment of tests.
- Interpretation of tests results.
- Planning and summary counseling interviews.
- Use of educational and vocational information.

Each staff member of VSC had a part in the role playing skit that had been excellently conceived and extremely well executed. Staff members taking part were: J. L. Broderick, executive director; Joseph V. Hanna, Ph.D., consultant and Counselor; Mrs. Marguerite Dickey, psychometrist; and counselors: William Angers, Ph.D., Hobart Pardee, Rosemary Brough, James Partica, Edward Kane-shige, James C. Day, Henn Hendriksson, David Hoats, and Mrs. Eugenic Neideck.

Some Aspects of Counseling in the YMCA Discussed

Harold G. Seashore, Ph.D., vice president of the Psychological Corporation, pointed out that all YMCA secretaries are counselors, but there is a difference between what the professional counselor does and what the YMCA secretary does as a generalist. He said that we do not identify advice-giving and information-giving as professional counseling. He said in all counseling there is some advice-giving and information-giving, but this was not the essence of counseling. Dr. Seashore said that specialized information-giving and disciplinary advice-giving are regular functions of such YMCA personnel as: the physical director, desk men, residence managers, and instructors—at the level of interpersonal relations. But disciplinary conferencing is not counseling. All teaching has components of counseling, and all counseling has components of teaching.

In discussing the approach to counseling, Dr. Seashore said that non-managerial conferences—those in the area of confidentiality and those of an exploring nature—came close to counseling.

Prestige Relationship

The YMCA secretary was referred to as a person of prestige, and many people will come to the YMCA secretary for this prestige-for-service relationship. They just want to talk to someone. The speaker said every YMCA secretary has to have some conception as to how to handle people who come for help with problems.

- Help to clarify the problem.
- Advise person to seek help from someone else.
- Determine whether the situation can be helped.
- Continue to be a sympathetic hearer.
- Maintain a supportive relationship, hoping person can help himself.

Counseling an Anxious Client

By Thomas A. Routh, Counselor,
Florida Council for the Blind, Tampa, Florida

The inability of some clients to adequately resolve their anxiety may present them with serious human relationship problems. Unsatisfied and unresolved frustrations can cause anxiety. Stress and conflict which are not absorbed into a client's emotional life result from either an external tension between the client and his environment, or from an internal emotional tension within the client himself which is caused by his particular emotional structure.

Some Causes of Anxiety

Inadequately handled frustrations, the thwarting of any desire, or a fear

- Support him until he discovers his own independence.
- Help person gain learning experience.

The YMCA Secretary and Specialized Counseling

Dr. Seashore pointed out that YMCA secretaries should have some notion of what specialized counseling is, and recognize that even vocational counseling involves all of a person's life adjustments. Psychological counseling ranges from simple matters to deeper emotional disturbances. The YMCA secretary has relationships to people in a whole range of activities, and the effectiveness of these relationships is measured in part by his understanding of the difference in his role and that of a professional counselor in handling cases which are other than routine.

Qualities of an Effective Counselor

Dr. Aura E. Severinghaus, associate dean of the Medical Faculty College of Physicians and Surgeons at Columbia University, gave a statement on the essentials in good counseling. He said (1) the counselor must have an interest to know and then know the individual and that the counselee knows something about the counselor; and (2) the counselor must know the situation thoroughly to which he is relating the individual and the individual must know that the counselor knows the situation. When these two are put together, a mutuality of confidence is established.

Developing Skills as a Counselor

Dr. Severinghaus discussed the following points as aids in developing skills as a counselor:

Attitude Toward Facts — The counselor should have the proper attitude toward facts—he should not pretend; should be able to recognize facts; should know how to assemble facts and relate them; and have disdain for illusions. The counselor should remember

that one of our basic needs is not, or will not be, adequately met, are the basic causes of anxiety. Success in life, then, is directly proportional to the success experienced by clients in handling emotional problems causing frustration.

When clients have been exposed to a continual series of emotional conflicts, it may lead to anxiety, and if these tensions are not resolved, they may lead to neurotic behavior. A neurosis is nothing more than a reflection of manifestation of a disordered or abnormal mental process by which anxious clients adopt peculiar patterns of behavior to compensate them for their anxiety. It

that facts are sometimes modified by one's attitude toward them.

Communication and Language—Dr. Severinghaus emphasized the importance of the counselor being able to transfer through language what is in his mind. He said:

- communication is essential in counseling,
- a good counselor is a good listener,
- the counselor must be able to communicate with the various disciplines.

Satisfaction in Counseling—The counselor must be sure to enjoy his work; he improves by being enthusiastic about his work. There needs to be a mutual concern between the counselor and the counselee.

Interrelatedness of Counseling—Counseling must be conceptualized as a part of something greater reflecting the total experience of a unit personality.

Keep an Open and Critical Mind—The counselor must keep his objectives clear, but retain an objective, open, and critical mind. He must recognize the importance of good interpersonal relationships: develop the individual touch. This is helped by the attitude of mind.

Maintain Humility and Sense of Value—There is nothing more important in our society than the human personality. When the counselor is called upon to assist a person in helping himself he should accept this as a challenge and with humility and a resolute mind.

Participants at City-Wide Staff Meeting on Counseling

Dr. Harold G. Seashore, Vice President, The Psychological Corporation, New York, N.Y.

Rev. Mark Shedron, Executive Director of Pastoral Services, National Council of Churches in the U.S.A., New York, N.Y.

Dr. Aura E. Severinghaus, Associate Dean and Secretary, Medical Faculty College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University, New York, N.Y.

Leo B. Marsh, Secretary, National Council of the YMCAs of the U.S.A., New York, N.Y.

J. Lawrence Broderick, Executive Director, Vocational Service Center, YMCA of Greater New York, New York, N.Y.

Edwin M. Barton, Director, P and S Club (YMCA), Medical School, Columbia University; and Director, Student Activities, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University, New York, N.Y.

Richard McClure, Executive, New York University YMCA, Washington Square Center, New York, N.Y.

is a deep-rooted emotional conflict which comes into full flowering when the emotional systems of anxious clients show signs of undue wear and tear, and, of which, they are not consciously aware. It is caused by an increase in stress-producing situations resulting in emotional tension. Neurosis results when clients try to conform and adapt themselves and fail.

Anxiety and Escape Mechanism

Anxious clients take particular courses of action, develop socially unpopular attitudes, or revert to escape mechanisms because they are fearful people whose sense of emotional safety has been seriously impaired. A neurosis is an anxious client's way of adjusting to difficult situations, no matter how inadequate they may be. The difference, then, between neurotic and non-neurotic clients is not one of quality. Rather it is one of quantity, depending completely on the amount of stress to which clients have been subjected.

Anxiety and Adjustment

The human organism is constantly beset with factors of strain, tension, and anxiety. The basic method employed by clients in handling emotional problem situations caused by anxiety is to reduce the friction between themselves and their environment. When clients encounter problems which they cannot handle, their primary reaction is to utilize any means which past experiences have shown to be effective ways of relieving anxiety. There are, then, two main types of adjustment difficulties — *regression* and *aggression* — or hostility. Regression is a falling back upon, or a retreating back to a level of protection which clients have already outgrown. This retreating back usually affords clients some degree of emotional easiness and protection, and, may show itself in many ways, such as clients leading more solitary lives, or, refusing to get out into the stream of life and literally "mix it up."

Aggression and Regression at Work

In *aggression*, on the other hand, clients may rebel against their anxiety, assuming strong hostile trends because they are unable to accept help, resenting all offers of assistance to them. A *regression*, moreover, may also assume the form of fixations in which clients do not develop beyond certain ages, remaining fixed at certain age levels and never establishing permanent relationships with others.

Atmosphere of Tension

Everyone is born into this world in an atmosphere of tension. The very

process of birth proves this. In childhood, we could not adequately cope with and handle problems. Even so, we reacted to these problems emotionally and with intense feeling. As our needs are filled, and as we experienced the feeling of being emotionally accepted, significant and safe, our basic anxiety became considerably less. Infancy is perhaps the one time in a client's life when all of his emotional needs were filled by someone other than himself.

Many times, such clients look for substitute figures with which to associate themselves during their anxiety. Usually, they revert back to that time in their lives when they felt safe, when their basic emotional needs were being adequately met, and, when there was no threat to them. Adults, then, when confronted with stress may subconsciously revert back to their infancy and adopt a dependent air to someone whom they think will fill their needs.

Recognizing Emotional Limitations

Clients react as they do because past experiences show that this type of action will make them safe. When clients recognize their anxiety for what it is, namely, a reaction to fear, it may become possible for them to live with and profit from it. There are some clients, however, who have been subjected to so much emotional deprivation that it has seriously warped and twisted their personalities. Adjustment begins, then, when clients accept anxiety and recognize their own emotional limitations and assets in dealing with reality. Such an adjustment necessarily deals with the client's re-educating his feelings, attitudes, and emotions.

Reactions to Tension Vary

The way clients behave during the time they are exposed to stress is determined not by the intrinsic nature of the tension itself, but by the way clients react, consider, or feel about it. The amount of stress which produces the tension that clients experience depends to an overwhelming extent on the amount of emotionality which accompanied the tension.

Emotional Patterns Reflect Personality

In associating with people, the element of personality is always present. Basically, personality is made up of many different sides embracing the following broad areas: moral, social, mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual. An analysis of these component areas indicates that it is made up of both the conscious as well as unconscious part of a man. The unconscious part of the personality is made up of (a) old

thoughts or memories, (b) old feelings, and (c) drives and motivations.

Old feelings, for example, are nothing more than emotional patterns built into people by their experiences with mother, father, men in general, or other past relationships.

The role played by emotional growth in total personality development is often underestimated. If the personality is grown in the major areas indicated, it may result in clients being more mature. If, however, the personality is not fully grown in these areas, if there is an over-concentration on any one of these facts, the result is often a lopsided, immature personality resulting from an unbalanced emotional growth.

When a client's personality is said to be adjusted, it is usually because his primary, essential physical, and emotional needs are being met and reasonably fulfilled. The physical needs of the personality can be seen in the desire of organism to achieve a certain amount of oral, anal, and genital pleasure. The basic emotional needs of the personality, on the other hand, are seen in the need:

—*To be loved, wanted, and accepted.*

—*To be safe and secure.*

—*To be important, significant, and worthwhile.*

If any one, or a combination of these needs is eliminated, we encounter an unadjusted client who needs and requires some human relationship therapy. The personality, then, is the determining factor as far as a client's adjustment is concerned, and, in practically every case, breakdowns in adjustment occur as a result of the particular personality structure of the client.

Personality Modified by Experience

Personality may be described as the psychophysical or psychosomatic organization and integration of the client as modified by his experiences with life. In referring to personality, we mean the behavior pattern which clients adopt as a result of environmental conditioning, surroundings, the manner and method of approach which they employ when problems confront them and the means which they use in overcoming these difficulties. Normally, personality is expressed by individual attitudes, emotional reactions and feelings. An objective study of the anxious client's personality has a direct bearing on his adjustment, because these traits indicate the kind of emotional re-education he is best prepared to undertake. The personality develops certain ways of reacting and these reaction patterns which are developed in the earliest years are influenced by the particular environmental conditions of the moment. In order to change these

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reaction patterns, we should try to effect an internal change in anxious clients rather than attempting to change their external environment.

Know Attitudes and Feelings

Anxiety brings with it certain pronounced psychological states and attitudes to making an adjustment. All of us at times feel a deep sense of emotional inadequacy and insecurity. At times, all of us become emotionally injured. It is precisely because of our own strong feelings that our relationships with other people become affected. In order to really help clients, we should know what their attitudes and feelings are, since their words and actions many times disguise their real feelings. As counselors, we should determine what attitudes clients have. Attitudes are formed from the conditioning which clients experience from the use of certain reaction patterns. Gradually, these patterns develop into trends of behavior representing a client's attempt to handle particular situations involving stress. Attitudes become strengthened and more fixed as clients mature, and in time, become an almost automatic response for them. Counselors, then, should know the client's ability to cooperate and deal effectively with their environment, since these are important factors which may seriously interfere with adjustment.

Need to Locate Hidden Conflicts

The emotional lives of clients are manipulated either by themselves or by outside circumstances. No change in the environment of anxious clients, however, whether it be physical or psychological, can be effective until such time as counselors intelligently work with the hidden conflicts located deep in clients. Because of these conflicts, all clients should have a feeling of being part of the society in which they live, of belonging to it, and contributing to it. This is one reason why counselors

should try to provide anxious clients with certain factors of motivation, realizing that underlying drives and motives may not be immediately apparent. Counselors, however, should be constantly aware that these factors do exist and may have an important bearing on the future outcome of the counseling. Counselors can supply clients with certain factors of motivation by stressing the fact that they may become more mature emotionally by analyzing their own difficulties, and making their own decisions to do something about it. It is the responsibility of counselors to assist anxious clients in arriving at a knowledge of themselves and, to do this adequately, counseling should be sincerely and *realistically* undertaken. We should work with the anxious client as a friend, but as a real, true, sincere, yet firm, friend who will point out emotional liabilities, as well, as emotional assets.

Fear Must Be Assessed

All anxiety is based on fear and any fear is a most uncomfortable reaction pattern. Not all fear, however, is bad or is to be avoided. This instinct was placed in the human body as the most elementary method of self-preservation. We have a great deal of anxiety in the world because we have not trained ourselves to face frustrations. As a result, we seriously deprive ourselves of the opportunity to steel ourselves emotionally. We try to keep ourselves away from all stresses and tensions completely forgetting that some day we have to grow up, not only physically but emotionally.

We are prone to seek "verbal pills" in an effort to get rid of our anxiety, yet, we should realize that true emotional security does not come about in this manner. Man was designed to accept a certain amount of stress as a normal process of living, and he is well able to stand a great deal of it.

"Safe" Path for Each Client

Human nature is the indefinable, non-measurable quantity with which we deal in problems involving human relations. We deal constantly with anxious clients who may not understand their problems, but still have very strong feelings about them. It is wise to realize that we are all anxious from time to time. Every anxious client needs to follow a safe path. The best mental health available, however, is of no avail unless the path which the client is following is safe, and he is following it safely.

The Counselor Has Limitations

In working with anxious clients and their problems of human relations,

counselors should realize that they are not miracle workers. They should see that anxious clients have correct concepts of reality, based on adequate verbal, sensory, and emotional associations, dealing with as many desirable real-life experiences as possible, by giving the client definite *feelings of emotional support*.

Counselors should realize that perfection in the field of human relations will never be realized. Experience shows that information as such cannot change attitudes. Perhaps a solution to the anxious client's problems will be found in better mental health. Essentially, counselors work with human nature, and there is no one set of rules, techniques, or procedures for helping anxious clients. The Book of Proverbs has some excellent advice, namely,

"Wisdom is the principal thing:

Therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting, get *understanding*."

The "wisdom" would seem to refer to certain necessary technical knowledge and skills which counselors should have, while the "understanding" would seem to pertain to the type and quality of the counseling relationship. Above, all, this "understanding" refers to the warm, human, sincere, and friendly approach to the client's problems, and to the permissive, non-critical air that should be adopted to the client's attitudes and feelings. This seems to be the keynote of a good emotionally supportive counseling relationship.

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Session on Counseling Planned During APGA Convention in St. Louis, Missouri

Dr. Douglas D. Blocksmo, chairman of the Committee on Counseling, announces a meeting around counseling at the time of the American Personnel Guidance Association convention. Members of the Committee on Counseling and other YMCA personnel attending the APGA convention in St. Louis, March 31-April 3, are invited to participate in a session around counseling at the Downtown Branch YMCA, Monday, March 31, beginning at 8:00 a.m.

Doctors Douglas D. Blocksmo, Harold G. Seashore, Donald E. Super, C. Winfield Scott, and J. Lawrence Broderick will constitute a panel for this session.

COUNSELING

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